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September 30, 2004

TO: Assembly Speaker, **FABIAN NUNEZ**  
Minority Floor Leader, **KEVIN McCARTHY**, Assembly  
President Pro Tem, **JOHN BURTON**  
Minority Leader, **DICK ACKERMAN**, Senate

FROM: Paul Gussman, Acting Executive Director  
California Workforce Investment Board

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON ACCESS TO CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The enclosed report is submitted pursuant to Chapter 1088, Statutes of 2002 (Assembly Bill 925, Aroner). By statute, the California Workforce Investment Board is required to provide the report to the Governor and the Legislature by September 30, 2004. The report describes changes in the workforce investment and health care systems at the federal, state and local levels and examines how those policy and program changes improved access to services for people with disabilities in California.

Enclosure

**Report on  
Access To  
California's Workforce Development System for  
People with Disabilities**

Prepared by the  
California Workforce Investment Board  
September 2004

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About 1,000,000 unemployed Californians with disabilities receive monthly federal and state disability cash benefits, totaling nearly \$9 billion per year. Most of these recipients are near or below the federal Poverty Income Guideline. Of the 2.5 million working-age Californians with disabilities, fewer than 50 percent reported being employed in 2000.<sup>1</sup>

In the mid-1990s, public policy began to shift toward restructuring workforce development delivery programs, public health care coverage and disability cash benefit programs in order to better respond to the education, training and employment needs of all citizens, including those with disabilities. The new policy framework required statutory and regulatory changes to redesign and build an inclusive system, and to train local service providers to ensure the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

In November 2003, the federal Social Security Administration (SSA), working with many state and local partners, began the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (Ticket to Work Program) in California. The SSA set an initial target of ten percent of California's working age disability beneficiaries. The Workforce Inclusion Act -- Chapter 1088, Statutes of 2002 (AB 925, Aroner) -- provided a structure for implementing the Ticket to Work Program by requiring improved collaboration among state, federal and local agencies. The Act recognized that improving employment options for all Californians is a critical long-term workforce and economic self-sufficiency strategy for the state's individuals with disabilities.

Over the last four years, California has combined funding from federal and state sources to support a multitude of initiatives intended to improve the ability of individuals with disabilities to obtain services including training and workplace supports so they can obtain employment and attain self-sufficiency through work. California's focus was on ensuring that the One-Stop system could provide these supports. Efforts included ensuring better physical access, training for staff so they can better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and improved collaboration among One-Stop and other community partners including employers, so training, services and workplace supports improved inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The system made significant progress but that progress was uneven due to the available sources of funding. Nonetheless, these efforts provided a significant base for implementation of the Ticket to Work Program. While much has been accomplished, much remains to do.

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<sup>1</sup> US Census 2000 Supplemental Survey

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, publicly funded programs for adults with disabilities fostered dependency on income supports, which in turn created barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency because supports such as health insurance and In Home Supportive Services typically disappear soon after beneficiaries begin working and before stability in the workplace occurs. Even in strong economic times, adults with disabilities had limited options in the workplace, resulting in prolonged reliance on public assistance programs and an unacceptably high unemployment rate.

Across the nation, a movement is underway to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in their communities and in employment. This movement led to successful efforts to improve work supports and inclusion in the workforce. AB 925 requires the State Board to report "...on the status of one-stop services to individuals with disabilities and implementation of the federal Ticket to Work program in California." This report describes changes in the workforce investment and health care systems at the federal, state and local levels, and examines how those policy and program changes evolved in California to improve access to services for people with disabilities.

This report begins with a review of relevant activity at the federal, state and local levels in California over the last eight years to improve access to One-Stop services. Then the report describes early implementation of the federal Ticket to Work Act in California. Following this review and assessment, the report briefly examines partial data available for some of California's workforce development programs. The final part of this report summarizes our findings.

## **EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN CALIFORNIA**

During the last eight years, changes in federal policy began to support increased participation in employment for individuals with disabilities. California's workforce development system, at both the state and local levels, increased its efforts to improve access to such individuals.

### **Federal Efforts**

While focused on more general health insurance related goals, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) marked the beginning of a new series of changes designed to address the issue of employment access for individuals with disabilities. Specifically, HIPAA contained provisions allowing workers with disabilities, and who had recent participation in public or private health insurance programs, to access most employer-based health insurance without being subjected to long waiting periods.

Section 4733 of the federal Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-33) expanded Medicaid eligibility criteria by allowing states to provide Medicaid coverage to certain working individuals with disabilities. This provision promotes self-sufficiency and encourages individuals with disabilities to seek employment opportunities without fear of losing essential health care benefits. A disabled worker can now use Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) in the workplace to supplement employer-based health care plans for seamless coverage of disability-related needs.

In July 1997, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded nearly \$5 million to 18 sites in California to begin development of a local One-Stop system. While the award of these funds signaled the beginning of California's One-Stop Career Center delivery system, policymakers and stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels continued working to design a workforce system that offers equal opportunity to all job seekers in California.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provided a new workforce preparation framework designed to meet the needs of the business community and to support people wanting employment and career advancement. One provision of the WIA calls for universal access to services. California committed to the development of a statewide One-Stop Career Center system that promotes customer choice, offers integrated access to a full array of workforce preparation programs, and provides universal access to individuals with disabilities without the need to request special accommodations. There are currently 162 comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers in California.

The federal Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Ticket Act) removes barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities who receive

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The major goals of the Ticket Act are:

- To increase rehabilitation choices available to beneficiaries, to improve access to vocational and employment services,
- To remove barriers that require people with disabilities to choose between health coverage and work, and
- To assure that more Americans with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and lessen their dependence on public benefits.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) launched the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (Ticket to Work Program) in California in November 2003. The Ticket Act operates by establishing employment networks comprised of service providers whose purpose is to provide employment, vocational rehabilitation and other support services from public and private sources; it also allows employed participants to retain other supports, including health insurance, needed to maintain employment.

### **State Efforts**

California passed legislation, appropriated funds and applied for federal and other grants to support development of the more inclusive workplace envisioned by the Ticket Act. The main elements of this framework focused on establishing the physical and training infrastructure to foster universal access to services and to support individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Chapter 820, Statutes of 1999 (AB 155, Migden)) created the California Working Disabled Medi-Cal Buy-In Program (CWD), which provides Medi-Cal coverage to certain working individuals with disabilities. The CWD Program broadens the eligibility for Medi-Cal buy-in to include employed individuals with disabilities whose income is less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level. The California Department of Health Services (DHS) received a \$500,000 transitional Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) in 2001, which the DHS used to establish the California Health Incentives Improvement Project (CHIIP). This project promotes outreach for the buy-in program, expands access to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) for working individuals with disabilities, and examines other health-related benefit issues. The state received additional grants of \$500,000 in 2003 and 2004 to continue the work begun under the CHIIP.

Chapter 1088, Statutes of 2002 (AB 925, Aroner) – known as the Workforce Inclusion Act -- requires extensive interagency and intergovernmental collaboration to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities. The Act:

1. Requires the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Agency, to implement a sustainable, comprehensive strategy to bring people with disabilities into employment at a rate comparable to that of the general adult population;
2. Makes State-funded personal assistance services available in the workplace as well as in the home;
3. Charges The Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities with increasing and improving cooperation among the DHS, the California Employment Development Department (EDD), and other state agencies and private employers;
4. Charges the Labor and Workforce Development and Health and Human Services Agencies with developing a sustainable, comprehensive strategy to improve inclusion of adults with disabilities in the workforce; and to support the goals of equal opportunity, independent living and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities;
5. Requires State and Local Workforce Investment Boards to include people with disabilities, if permitted by federal law; and
6. Directs The Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), when funds are available, to support comprehensive local or regional benefits planning and outreach programs to assist individuals with disabilities in removing barriers to work.

The California Workforce Investment Board (State Board) convened the Universal Access Work Group (UAWG), a multi-agency task force, in early 2001 to ensure that programs and services under the WIA are accessible to persons with disabilities. The UAWG, which includes public and private partners, set goals to address issues related to assessment and standards, training, technical assistance, administration and monitoring, and provision of resources within a framework of universal accessibility at the state's One-Stop Career Center System. The Work Group drafted and disseminated a comprehensive Physical and Program Access Self-Assessment Guide for use by all Local Workforce Investment Areas (Local Areas) and One-Stop Career Centers. The UAWG reflects the State Board's values by recommending policy, modeling interagency coordination and partnership, continuing capacity-building, and leveraging resources.

In addition to the UAWG, a consortium of state partners supports capacity building in the One-Stop system to serve people with disabilities. This group consists of the State Board, the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the DOR, the State Rehabilitation Council, the EDD, the World Institute on Disability, San Diego State University, and the California Workforce Association. To augment federal funding, the consortium supported DOR's receipt of a DOL grant of about \$1 million to operate the Workforce Investment Resources and Accommodations Project (WRAP). WRAP funds support the design and structure of services to customers with disabilities served through the

One-Stop system. WRAP also funds an on-line Benefits Planning Information Center to provide information on state-specific and updated benefits and resources for persons with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Project activities are coordinated through the Universal Access Work Group.

To support implementation of the WIA's universal access requirement, California appropriated funds in the budgets for fiscal years (FY) 2000 and 2002 for a variety of activities. The Budget Act of 2000 appropriated \$1.4 million from the Governor's WIA 15 Percent Discretionary Funds to improve access to One-Stop Career Centers for persons with disabilities. Of that \$1.4 million, \$900,000 supported an interagency agreement between the DOR and EDD to provide technical support, assistance and training to local areas and One-Stop partners. This training addressed both the program and physical access of persons with disabilities and focused on service delivery, disability employment law and disability awareness.

In January 2002, the EDD, in collaboration with the DOR, announced the availability of the remaining \$500,000 of the FY 2000 appropriation to assist local areas in the purchase or acquisition of auxiliary aid and services specifically for new, expanded or enhanced program access within the One-Stop system for persons with disabilities. At the recommendation of the Universal Access Work Group, 31 Local Areas received funding from this \$500,000 to make program and physical enhancements to One-Stop facilities. A small allocation from these funds also supported the California Employment 2002 "Moving Forward" Conference held October 2-3, 2002, in Los Angeles. Over 200 service providers, community-based organizations, adult education providers, One-Stop Career Center staff, employers, and representatives of various state departments attended the Conference.

The Budget Act of 2002 appropriated an additional \$1.4 million from the Governor's WIA 15 Percent Discretionary Funds to continue improvement of access for people with disabilities in One-Stop Career Centers. These funds targeted the continued expansion and improvement of statewide capacity-building efforts involving customer access to facilities, information technology and program services, and funding for innovative projects through local organizations to improve outreach, service delivery and outcomes for people with disabilities. Statewide efforts supported by these funds include:

- On March 9, 2004, the State Board, in partnership with the EDD, the DOR, and the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, announced the availability of \$800,000 for grants to Local Workforce Investment Boards (Local Boards). The purpose of these grants was to develop innovative projects to encourage local collaboration between public and private service providers and One-Stop Career Centers to develop seamless services to customers with hearing and visual impairments. Eleven Local

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<sup>2</sup> ([www.disabilitybenefits101.org](http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org))



Boards received grants to conduct demonstration projects in cooperation with community-based organizations serving people with disabilities. These Local Areas also will use these funds to develop partnerships to enhance the procurement of assistive technology and the use of auxiliary aids for One-Stop Career Center customers with hearing and visual impairments.

- The State Board received \$225,000 from this appropriation to train service providers serving individuals with learning disabilities and to facilitate screening and assessment for learning disabilities (LDs) among individuals with multiple barriers to employment. These funds will provide “training-for-trainers” to One-Stop staff in screening for, and assessment of, LDs. Further, the State Board surveyed the workforce community in April 2004. One-Stop Career Center staff will receive the results, including potential promising practices identified by respondents, when the analysis of survey responses is complete.
- The DOR’s Disability Access Section received \$200,000 to continue providing technical support assistance and training to Local Areas and One-Stop partners to address both program and physical access for persons with disabilities in the areas of service delivery, disability employment law and disability awareness. The DOR provided additional training sessions to the One Stops, bringing the total number of training sessions since 2001 to 150 and the number of accessibility studies to 100.
- The Department of Mental Health, the DOR, the EDD and the State Board used \$100,000 to leverage other funds to provide cross-program One-Stop training in five communities on mental health disabilities. The design of this demonstration project is to provide basic information to local One-Stop operators and staff and their community partners about how to form collaborative relationships to improve employment opportunities for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. The focus of this project is on the development of services, resources and supports to promote employment outcomes. Training in the pilot communities of Contra Costa, Mendocino, Los Angeles and San Diego Counties will continue through December 2004.
- The California Disability Employment Symposium 2003, “Moving Forward II,” held October 7-8, 2003, in Oakland, received \$75,000. As with the first “Moving Forward” Symposium in 2002, over 200 persons attended.

**Grants Received and Other Program Support.** In addition to the funds discussed earlier, the State Board, EDD and the Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities took the initiative to seek out opportunities to obtain grant funds from the federal government and other sources. These efforts resulted in the following:

- In 2000-01, the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and other state partners received a Work Incentive Grant from the DOL's Employment and Training Administration. This \$500,000 grant supports implementation of a strategy to address barriers to employment for people with disabilities identified by One-Stop Career Center frontline staff. One-Stop Centers identified the need (1) for well-trained, highly knowledgeable resource staff at One-Stop Career Centers to provide comprehensive employment information regarding services and benefits for customers with disabilities; (2) to increase the business community's awareness of the employability of qualified job applicants with disabilities; and (3) for state and local partnerships to identify and implement innovative service strategies using assistive technology. The grants also allowed demonstration sites to conduct outreach to disability communities to inform people with disabilities of available services.
- The state also received a \$600,000 DOL grant to establish Disability Program Navigators at nine Local Areas and One-Stop Career Centers. San Diego, Napa, Orange, Los Angeles, Kern, San Bernardino, Santa Clara, San Francisco and Humboldt Counties received funds for Disability Program Navigator staff positions. These Navigators provide information on benefit planning resources to people with disabilities, develop linkages to employers, conduct outreach to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities, and act as resources for others in the workforce investment community to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge about federal, state and local public and private programs.
- In 2002, the California Department of Social Services received a \$1.3 million federal Real Choice Systems Change grant to make improvements to the IHSS Program to better serve employed individuals with disabilities in the workplace. The IHSS Program provides services to more than 275,000 Medi-Cal eligible individuals. The grant funds supported development of training and educational materials, identified support needs of IHSS providers, and created materials, tools and work aids to improve the quality of care that eligible individuals receive.
- In March 2003, the UAWG, in conjunction with the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, applied for and won a \$500,000 Work Incentive Grant from the DOL's Employment and Training Administration. The grant supports development of curricula and provision of training to One-Stop Center staff on basic disability awareness and benefit structure. The goal is to enhance the ability of One-Stop Centers to form Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work Program, to build employer knowledge of disability benefits and work incentives, and to coordinate outreach efforts.
- Also in 2003, the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy awarded the State Board \$500,000 for a State Alignment Grant intended to provide

innovative services to youth with disabilities, in support of the national Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities project. The award will provide funds to three sites to conduct resource mapping to assess local youth service delivery infrastructure, develop a unified State plan to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities, and conduct local pilot demonstration projects to determine how youths with disabilities can best obtain transition services. Since California is a leader in the use of resource mapping to identify workforce development-related community resources available to youth, the grant focuses on developing transition strategies, using existing community intermediaries to connect with local youth councils and to collaborate with community organizations. This grant builds on an extensive and strong history of innovative programs serving transition-age youth with disabilities in California. If California is successful in implementing the first-year grant, the state could receive an additional \$2 million over the next four years.

### **Local Area Efforts**

California's Local Areas embraced federal and state requirements for development of a workforce preparation and employment system that provides access for all clients. Local Boards applied for and received numerous direct federal grants to this end (consequently, the State Board does not have complete information on all grants received). In addition, in some instances, Local Boards used internal resources to develop collaboratives. Examples of projects funded to promote access to services and employability of individuals with disabilities include:

- The North Bay Employment Connection addresses the regional workforce development needs of four contiguous counties in the northern San Francisco Bay region: Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. The Consortium received a DOL Customized Employment Grant award for its INCLUSION Project (Implementing the New Freedom Initiative through Customized employment and Linkages for Ultimately Seamless service In One-Stops Newly trained). This grant supported development of a system to better serve individuals with disabilities, increase access to services, provide higher wages for job seekers and increase the skilled labor pool for local employers. Additionally, the Napa Workforce Investment Board received a \$500,000 DOL Innovative Demonstration Grant to develop a model program to serve youth with disabilities. In August 2003, the Napa Local Board received a \$300,000 DOL Work Incentive Grant to enhance services available in One-Stop Career Centers to people with disabilities.
- The San Diego Workforce Partnership received a \$750,000 Customized Employment Grant from the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy. The Partnership used the Customized Employment Project to upgrade the physical and programmatic capacity of One-Stop Career Centers in order to increase access and provide seamless and high-quality employment services to

people with disabilities. Collaborative partners in the project include governmental, private nonprofit and community-based organizations. In addition, the locally based Able-Disabled Advocacy organization received a \$500,000 DOL Innovative Demonstration Grant in 2002 to develop a model program to serve youth with disabilities.

- Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire and its partner agencies piloted the Disability Information Technology Initiative program. The project's overall goal is to provide entry-level information technology training and employment services to persons with disabilities. Key activities include enhancing linkages between existing program services, developing new post-employment services, and educating employers on reasonable accommodation strategies to employ individuals with disabilities. To date, the program has served over 200 individuals and placed over 80 of them in computer-related positions with an average hourly wage of \$15.71. DOL extended the program's funding for a second year.
- The City of Los Angeles launched the EmployABILITY Partnership program. The Partnership, a collaboration of both governmental and private sector organizations, is working to improve services to the disabled within the Los Angeles WorkSource system. Through a contract with the DOR, on-line LEGACY Training on disability awareness and etiquette is available. LEGACY training has been widely conducted throughout the state to increase the capacity of One-Stop Career Centers to serve people with disabilities. Most recently, LEGACY training coordinators have collaborated with the Disability Program Navigators in the One-Stops (funded with federal WIG III grants) and the Workplace Accommodation Specialists (funded with federal WIG II grants), who promoted training in their areas and encouraged One-Stops in the San Francisco-San Jose metropolitan area to participate. The partners assisted in the development of programs that include an EmployABILITY Network Web site (<http://www.employ-ability.org>), and certification to tutor WorkSource staff in providing high-quality services to customers with disabilities, and an EmployABILITY Hotline to provide disability related information and referrals to local resources.
- The South Bay Local Workforce Investment Board's One-Stop Business and Career Centers received a DOL Job Training Grant for \$864,000 to further enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The main objectives are the development of competitive skills among the disabled population and improved hiring practices by employers. The City of Hawthorne, a member of the South Bay Board, received a \$150,000 Work Incentive Grant to assist in meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
- Pride Industries in Roseville, California received a \$500,000 DOL grant to create long-term jobs for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

- The Community Rehabilitation Industries (CRI) of Long Beach, California received a \$100,000 Customized Employment Grant from the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy to address the employment and training needs of persons with disabilities. CRI conducts computer-skill training using adaptive equipment for deaf and hearing-impaired clients. This project customizes training to meet the employment goals of each student. Additionally, the City of Long Beach Workforce Development Bureau in August 2003 received a \$300,000 Work Incentive Grant to expand employment and career opportunities for people with disabilities through One-Stop Career Centers.

### **California Foundations**

California foundations also provided funds at both the state and local levels to fund activities that support development of a more inclusive One-Stop system or to improve the employability of individuals with disabilities. One example is The Medi-Cal Policy Institute, funded by the California Health Care Foundation. The Institute took a proactive research interest in the intersection of health care, disability and employment. In April 2003, the Institute, in collaboration with The Lewin Group and a community advisory group, published the nation's first detailed look at a Medicaid buy-in program for workers with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

The national non-profit Disability Funders Network held several California forums informing foundations of their potential roles with the Ticket Act and the health and employment needs of workers with disabilities. As a result, a wider pool of California and local foundations are more knowledgeable and interested in supplementing (rather than replacing) state funds to foster new innovative programs and employment strategies for workers with disabilities.

The California Endowment, since 2000, has provided funding for the California Work Incentives Initiative (CWII), a community-based collaboration housed at Oakland's World Institute on Disability. CWII provides staff support to the California Work Group on Work Incentives and Health Care (CWG). The CWG is a center for grass-roots efforts to develop public policy recommendations to improve program capacity for people with disabilities who seek access to full employment. CWG participants meet regularly to develop consensus-based agendas for implementation of new state and federal employment and health care legislation affecting workers with disabilities. The CWG is an open and accessible statewide disability network of ethnically and culturally diverse consumers, advocates, benefit planners and interested stakeholders in public programs, including staff at the Social Security Administration and state health and employment agencies.

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<sup>3</sup> The California Work Disabled Program: Lessons Learned, Looking Ahead online at [www.medi-cal.org](http://www.medi-cal.org).

The CWG supported California's application for the MIG and advocated policies included in AB 925. In 2003, CWG activities centered on developing a "benefits planning" curriculum designed for training the trainers, as well as training staff across multiple state programs and in One-Stop Career Centers. These trainings focused on state-of-the-art benefits planning for California workers with disabilities. With the support of the Community Technology Foundation of California, the CWII conducted a series of training sessions.<sup>4</sup> CWII also received funds from the Alliance Health Care Foundation to conduct six health and benefits training sessions in San Diego in October 2003. Two prominent organizations, the World Institute on Disability and Options: A Benefits Training Foundation, collaborated to conduct benefits training in 13 states. The collaborative plans an evaluation of these trainings to assist frontline staff in the support of expanded health and benefit trainings.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on working with a disability in California see <http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org>.

## **STATE OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FEDERAL TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM**

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Ticket Act) establishes the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (Ticket to Work Program). The goal of the Ticket to Work Program is to improve the availability of service providers to serve Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries with disabilities who seek employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services to assist them in obtaining, regaining, and maintaining self-supporting employment. Under the Ticket to Work Program, SSA issues tickets to eligible beneficiaries between the ages of 18 and 64. The ticket is a document containing personal information about the recipient and general information about the Program.<sup>5</sup> Eligible beneficiaries have the option of taking the ticket to an approved service provider – called an employment network (EN) – of their choice or to the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency in their state. Participation in the Ticket to Work Program is voluntary.

The SSA rolled out the Ticket to Work Program nationwide in three phases beginning early in 2002. California was in the third phase, beginning in November 2002. The SSA contracted with MAXIMUS, Inc. to manage the Ticket to Work Program. The SSA, through MAXIMUS, enters into contracts with qualified organizations, through an application and certification process, to coordinate and deliver employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services as ENs. Ticket holders are eligible to receive the services they need to achieve their vocational goals. Finally, under the Ticket Act, ENs can choose which ticket-holders they serve in their Ticket to Work Program activities.

Examples of the types of organizations that can become ENs include:

- WIA One-Stop Career Centers and Local Boards
- Disability and rehabilitation services providers
- Staffing companies
- State and local government agencies
- Community-based employment support service providers
- Public and private sector schools and colleges
- Faith-based groups
- Multicultural organizations
- Public and private hospitals
- Foundations
- Disability management and insurance companies
- Native American tribes
- Employers
- Small business development and micro-enterprise entities

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<sup>5</sup> An example of the Ticket is accessible at [www.yourtickettowork.com/ttw\\_ticket](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/ttw_ticket).

Services offered by ENs include:

- Business/Employer Mentoring Programs and Internships
- Career Consulting (portfolio preparation, resume writing, interview skills)
- Career Strategies (skills assessment, development and job coaching)
- Case management
- Employment (hiring a beneficiary to work for the EN)
- Employment-Supported
- Habilitation Services (independent living training, assistance in support of work)
- Job Accommodations
- Job Placement/Employment Services
- Job Service Vouchers
- Job Training
- Peer Mentoring Services
- Personal Attendance Support Services
- Post-Employment Support (Job/Employment Retention Services)
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation
- Referral to Services/Support from Local Mental Health or Developmental Disabled Service Providers
- School to Work Transition Services
- Self-Employment/Business Start-up
- Services under a formal agreement with a Local Board and/or One-Stop
- Situational Assessment
- Special Language Capacity
- Transitional Employment Program
- Transportation Assistance
- Work Incentives Counseling

The Ticket Act authorized the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services to award grants for system change projects and for individual supportive services through initiatives such as Real Choices. It also authorized Medicaid Infrastructure Grants for states to design, establish and coordinate infrastructure within their health, social service and employment systems.

Since 2001, the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy has disbursed nearly \$30 million in federal grants to support two projects. The Customized Employment Grants and the New Freedom Initiative Grants have the goal of integrating Americans with disabilities into the workforce. These grants provide funds for strategic planning and implementation activities designed to improve the employment and career advancement of people with disabilities. The awards support state efforts to develop model programs and innovative approaches to customized employment for adults with disabilities, innovative demonstration grants and high school programs for youth with disabilities, and technical



assistance for community rehabilitation providers using Special Minimum Wage certificates for people with disabilities.

The DOL and the SSA also offered other resources to support implementation of the Ticket Act, including:

- A one-stop information web site, [www.DisabilityInfo.gov](http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov), to direct individuals to federal government web sites with information relevant to people with disabilities, employers and service providers. The site also has information about civil rights, education, employment, housing, health care and transportation.
- The National Center on Workforce and Disability for Adults is available to assist One-Stops, State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, agencies and employers.
- The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth provides information and ensures that youth with disabilities receive full access to high-quality services in integrated settings that will maximize their opportunities for employment and independent living.
- The newly-created position of Disability Program Navigator, who works in One-Stop Career Centers and links people with disabilities to benefit planning resources, employers and outreach organizations. Additionally, Navigators form a specialized network to link employers to job seekers with disabilities. State Workforce Investment Boards in 17 states, including California, received funding to establish Navigator positions in One-Stop Career Centers. As mentioned earlier, California received an award of \$600,000 for this purpose.

The Ticket Act authorized the SSA to establish the Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) Program. In 2002, under BPAO, California Independent Living Centers and other community-based organizations received 13 grants totaling over \$4 million to provide accurate information about federal work incentives to individuals with disabilities who receive SSI and SSDI. These organizations, which have broad geographical areas of service delivery, are responsible for informing SSI and SSDI beneficiaries of the advantages of using work incentives, and for providing them with benefits planning advice when they obtain employment. Public Law 108-203 signed in March 2004, reauthorizes the BPAO grants program for another five years.

In 2004, the SSA awarded Work Incentives Assistance Program grants to designated protection and advocacy systems. California's protection and advocacy entity received about \$450,000 to assist SSI and SSDI recipients in obtaining information about vocational rehabilitation and employment services. The program also funds grant recipients to provide advocacy for beneficiaries with a disability who need such help to access services needed to obtain employment.

The State Board recently surveyed Local Boards to obtain information about their participation in the implementation of the Ticket to Work Program in California.

The survey elicited information about the organizational relationship between each Local Board and its One-Stops, and how that relationship affected the choice to become an EN. The survey also sought information about the factors that Local Boards found important in determining whether to become an EN, including staffing considerations, the preparation process for becoming an EN, and any program support and technical assistance considered important to improving the success of the Ticket to Work effort. The survey resulted in a 40 percent return rate.

Since November 2003, 81 organizations received certification as ENs for the actual delivery, coordination and/or referral of services. Of these ENs, only two survey respondents, one Local Board and one One-Stop Center, reported certification as ENs. Local board respondents who chose not to pursue EN status cited considerations such as the availability of other local agencies in their area capable of serving the disabled population, staff and funding restrictions, complexity of the Ticket to Work Program's administrative and payment tracking procedures, and insufficient outreach and training activities. Another consideration is that the DOR, as a mandated partner in the One-Stop Centers, is often the central point of contact for eligible Ticket to Work customers.

Conversely, the primary considerations Local Boards noted for not becoming ENs include the need to serve a universal population, limited funding, need for technical assistance, training and development of additional tools and services to aid and encourage local partners to become ENs.

Complicated administration and fiscal restrictions under the program are cited as deterrents to Local Board efforts to pursue EN certification. The reporting and tracking of a beneficiary's activity is considered too labor intensive for small agencies with limited staff and resources. The initial cash outlay for services by an agency to a ticket-holder, the payment option methods, reimbursement procedures, and the potential risk of disallowed costs or not recouping the actual costs of services provided also are factors reported to have curtailed Local Boards from seeking EN certification. California and other states work with the SSA to advocate for amendments in several program areas. States have limited ability to make administrative or fiscal changes without federal support and, on their own, are limited to ensuring linkages between current programs and the Ticket to Work Program.

The following is a brief synopsis of the progress that has occurred in California on the Ticket to Work Program as of August 2004:

843,605	Tickets released to eligible individuals for volunteer participation in Ticket to Work
81	Employment Networks certified
549	Tickets assigned to Employment Networks authorizing them to receive payments for successful outcomes
2943	Tickets issued to beneficiaries at their request

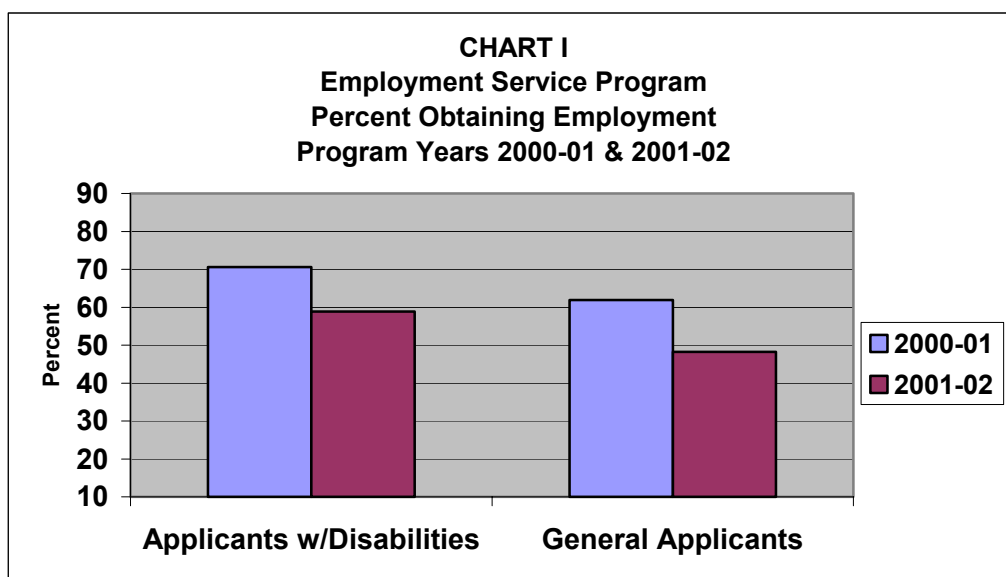
## JOB SERVICE AND WIA TITLE I DATA FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Currently, only limited data, including performance information, are available for examining whether the projects and programs discussed in this report improved accessibility to California's One-Stop system for individuals with disabilities. The primary reasons for gaps in the data are that not all programs break out their data based on whether clients use the One-Stop system, and not all workforce programs define and verify disability in the same manner. Further, most of the state-level efforts emanating from federal and state legislation, including AB 925, took effect after 2000, and data sets were not yet set up for evaluative purposes. Consequently, it is too early to infer improvements for individuals with disabilities with the existing limited data sets.

The data reported here provide only an initial, very limited, glimpse into some cases of individuals with disabilities who obtained services through the One-Stop system. Specifically, the programs for which we have data are Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program and the WIA Title I Adult Services, Dislocated Worker and Older Youth programs.

### WIA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program

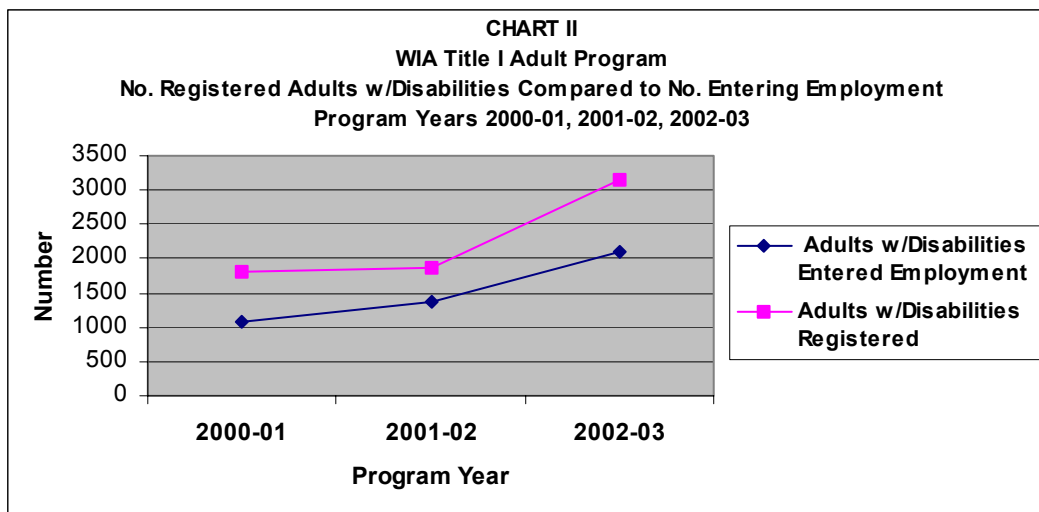
Chart 1 shows that applicants with disabilities participating in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program obtained employment at comparable or slightly higher rates than the general population during 2000-01 and 2001-02. Compared to other workforce programs, the Employment Service Program serves more veterans with disabilities. Over the two program years, the program collected employment related data on an average of about 16,000 individuals with disabilities and an average of 1,230,730 individuals without disabilities.



Source: State Board Analysis of US DOL-ETA 9002A Report

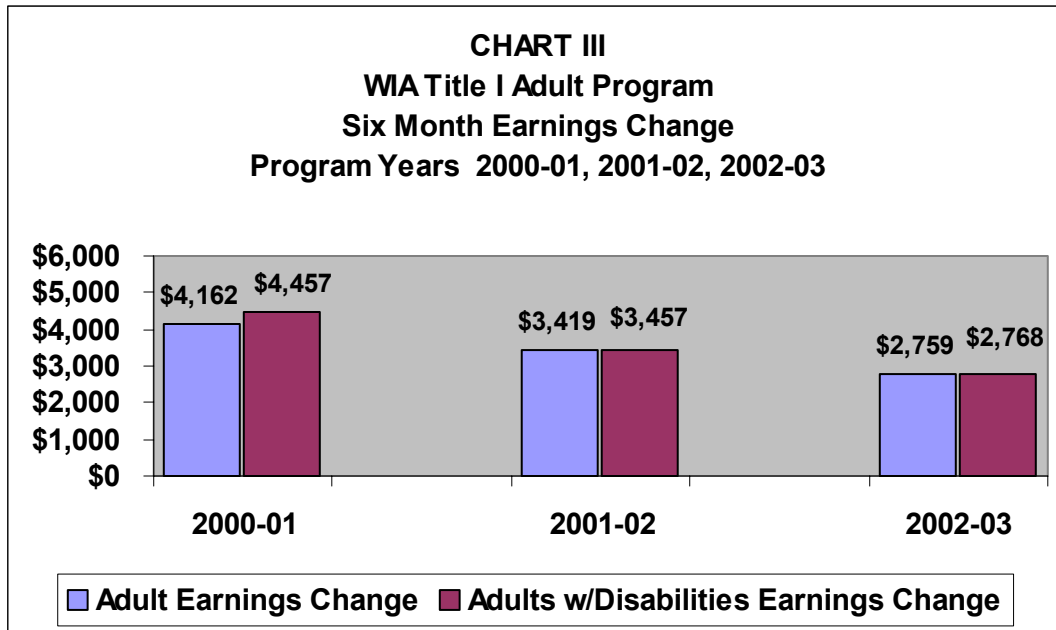
## WIA Title I Adult Services Program

Chart 2 shows that the number of individuals with disabilities receiving services through WIA Title I Adult Services increased in each year, as did their entry into employment. Further, as shown in Table 1, Appendix 1, of those who registered for services in the WIA Title I Adult Services programs over the years 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03, adults and adults with disabilities found employment at somewhat lower rates: respectively, 72, 77, and 73 percent for adults; and 61, 74, and 67 percent for adults with disabilities. Table 1 also shows that the employment retention rates are comparable for both groups.



Source: State Board Analysis of WIA Annual Reports 2000, 2001-02, 2002-03

Chart 3 on the following page compares earnings gains for those who found employment over the same three program years. Adult participants with disabilities appear to have earnings gains comparable to those for adult participants without disabilities. The program collected data on an average of 19,141 adults who exited the program and an average of 2,267 adults with disabilities who exited the program over the three program years. It is important to note again that these data should be interpreted carefully. Specifically, one should not assume that the data indicate that the programs referenced in this report caused the results presented. The US SSA funded a national evaluation of Ticket to Work Program, which will report on national implementation. In addition, the State Board's evaluation of WIA implementation includes a look at Local Area efforts to include individuals with disabilities. Nonetheless, encouraging state and local programs to use uniform approaches to defining disability, and collecting consistent administrative and performance data for these populations could improve our ability to assess programs in the future.



Source: State Board Analysis of WIA Annual Reports 2000, 2001-02, 2002-03

Finally, Table 1 in Appendix I provides data on the Dislocated Worker and Older Youth programs. As the table shows, these programs registered many fewer individuals with disabilities than did the Adult program. Further, the results do not exhibit clear trends; consequently, there is little to say about the data.

## **SUMMARY AND FINDINGS**

Over the last eight years, California has worked to improve the physical and collaborative infrastructures supporting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. This activity reflects the state's long-standing commitment to include individuals with disabilities in the social and employment fabric of our state. The efforts outlined in this report show the federal, state and local coordination and support needed to enhance program delivery at the local level. California's goal is to provide opportunities based on customer choice within a framework that can promote independence and financial stability.

Improving access to the workplace for Californians with disabilities depends on building a collaborative infrastructure to support physical and staff access at the local level that supports inclusion of such individuals in One-Stop Career Center activities. This has involved the development of training programs for staff and clients, modifications of centers, and improving linkages among service providers. A second focus of activity during this time was on creating the medical and other supports needed by individuals with disabilities to improve sustained employment and, ultimately, economic self-sufficiency. These activities centered on modifications to the Medi-Cal program, so that employed individuals with disabilities would not immediately lose their eligibility, and improvements to the IHSS program so that eligible individuals can receive supportive services in the workplace. Finally, a major focus of efforts was to ensure that One-Stop Centers had trained and dedicated staff to guide individuals with disabilities, and their present and potential employers, through various processes.

Reviewing the pattern of funding to support inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the One-Stop system indicates that limited and, often targeted, funding through federal and other grant programs helped some statewide efforts to improve access and provide relevant services; however, in many instances the grants limited activity to relatively few sites. This left the One-Stop system with uneven implementation of physical, staffing and other services to comply fully with AB 925 and Ticket to Work. Local and state entities continue to develop and design initiatives to improve access. While much has been accomplished, it is clear that much remains to do.

**APPENDIX 1 – Table I**

<b>WIA Title I Performance Measure Outcomes Program Year 2000-2001</b>				<b>Source: WIA Title I Annual Report 2000</b>		
	Adult Program	Adults w/Disabilities	Dislocated Worker Program	Dislocated Workers w/Disabilities	Older Youth Program	Older Youth w/Disabilities
Entered Employment	71.8% 11,202/15,611	60.5% 1,088/1,799	77% 17,544/22,773	70.5% 821/1,165	68.3% 1,777/2,602	58% 123/212
Employment Retention Rate	80.9% 10,681/13,206	77.3% 937/1,212	87.2% 15,304/17,544	85% 698/821	77.6% 1,574/2,028	74.1% 100/135
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$4,162 \$53,328,380/12,813	\$4,457 \$5,272,285/1,183	102% \$214,722,351/210,443,270	131.7% \$8,503,934/6,456,535	\$3,472 \$6,937,436/1,998	\$3,209 \$429,973/134
Employment & Credential Rate	12.9% 1,545/11,997	7.9% 95/1,201	17.4% 1,876/10,792	15.5% 85/548	6.1% 178/2,925	4% 9/228
<b>WIA Title I Performance Measure Outcomes Program Year 2001-2002</b>				<b>Source: WIA Title I Annual Report 2001 02</b>		
	Adult Program	Adults w/Disabilities	Dislocated Worker Program	Dislocated Workers w/Disabilities	Older Youth Program	Older Youth w/Disabilities
Entered Employment	76.7% 10,044/13,092	74.3% 1,380/1,858	82.6% 7,068/8,562	77.9% 348/447	70.6% 1,013/1,434	62.8% 86/137
Employment Retention Rate	81.9% 9,205/11,234	81.5% 1,188/1,457	88.1% 6,229/7,068	87.6% 305/348	79.2% 859/1,084	82.3% 79/96
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$3,419 \$35,776,606/10,464	\$3,457 \$4,453,098/1,288	104.3% \$88,999,200/85,340,895	120% \$4,512,855/3,759,598	\$3,191 \$3,283,284/1,029	\$3,087 \$287,062/93
Employment & Credential Rate	53.8% 3,109/5,774	52.2% 347/665	57.9% 2,785/4,808	53.5% 136/254	27.1% 442/1,631	27.3% 44/161
<b>WIA Title I Performance Measure Outcomes Program Year 2002-2003</b>				<b>Source: WIA Title I Annual Report 2002-03</b>		
	Adult Program	Adults w/Disabilities	Dislocated Worker Program	Dislocated Workers w/Disabilities	Older Youth Program	Older Youth w/Disabilities
Entered Employment	73.2% 21,012/28,721	67.2% 2,114/3,145	82.8% 13,717/16,576	76.4% 682/893	70.9% 1,935/2,728	57.1% 132/231
Employment Retention Rate	80.8% 20,036/24,804	78.6% 1,815/2,308	87.9% 12,061/13,717	86.2% 588/682	80.4% 1,688/2,099	80.9% 114/141
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$2,759 \$65,648,638/23,798	\$2,768 \$6,129,323/2,214	84.0% \$169,141,667/\$201,279,277	85.1% \$7,687,725/9,031,199	\$3,464 \$6,750,644/1,949	\$2,669 \$346,912
Employment & Credential Rate	53.9% 7,050/13,090	43.5% 499/1,147	65.4% 4,650/7,114	62.6% 265/423	32.5% 1,029/3,163	30.6% 83/271